

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

## Drawings from the J. Pierpont Morgan Collection

Lent for Exhibition by Mr. John Pierpont Morgan

IN arranging an exhibition of drawings selected from the collection of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, the Prints Division of The New York Public Library has tapped a source of wide and varied interest. "Among the many things," wrote Royal Cortissoz in 1913, "that Mr. Morgan did for the lover of art in this country, we reckon nothing more important than his participation in the European cult for drawings by the old masters. We designate that cult 'European' advisedly, for it is only in very recent years that American collectors have given it any serious attention."

The interest in drawings by the masters is evidently increasing, even if one judges only by the increasing number of publications reproducing drawings in particular collections or by individual artists, the one devoted to Rembrandt alone comprising 450 plates.<sup>1</sup>

Primarily, drawings make their strong appeal through the sense which they give of intimate view of the artists' methods, a fact emphasized by various writers, — Chateaubriand, for example, and Sidney Colvin. In looking at them we are, so to speak, looking over the artist's shoulder as he works. We get an insight into his attitude toward life and art at times when he may be troubled little or not at all by direct thoughts of the public. There is often in drawings a spontaneity, a directness, a freshness of impression which may not be always so apparent when a final conception is put with brush on canvas. Of course, all this brings up again the matter of technique, of the mention of which some people are much more afraid than they need be. There is such a thing as a healthy interest in technique, in processes. The boy dissects the

<sup>1</sup> In the Art Division of the Library will be found numerous collections of reproductions of drawings, a list of which, it is hoped, will be published shortly in the BULLETIN.



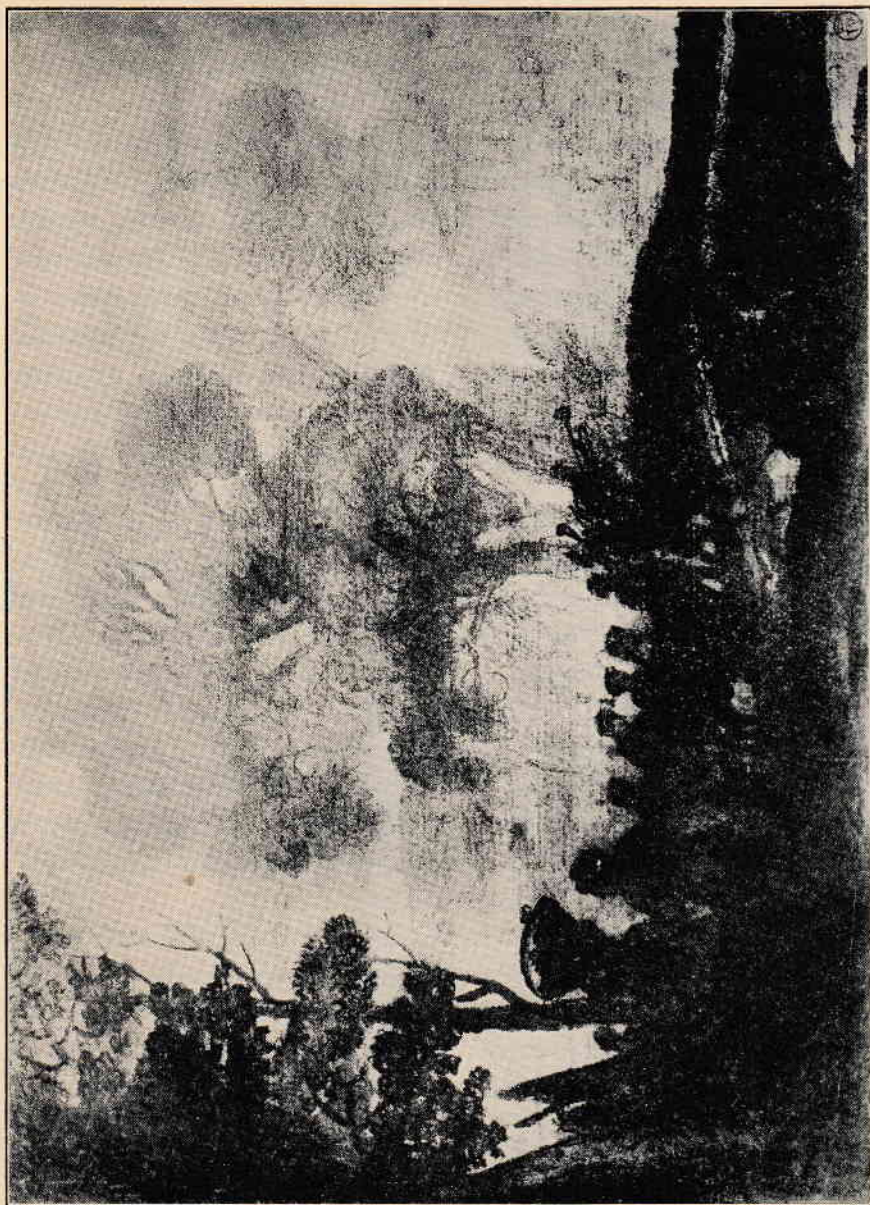
REMBRANDT  
TOBIT RECEIVING HIS FATHER'S BLESSING  
Pen and bistre, washed

clock to see how the wheels go 'round, and many of us are "children of a larger growth" in that spirit of curiosity.

The technical element in such an exhibition of drawings should appeal particularly to the art student. How the masters handled pen, chalk, and brush in making studies and sketches offers the student suggestion and stimulation and example. Here he may see how Rembrandt scratched and scrawled with the pen, or put in big broad washes, or brushed light lines in landscape subjects (similar to his etched ones), according to need and mood, and always with a sufficiency appropriate to the subject in hand. Or how Raphael used sharp yet sinuous lines, limited in number; the thing said, he stopped. Again, how methods are varied by the facile Guercino, or by Annibale Carracci, who made one drawing carefully in strong masses with red chalk, and another in light pen outlines and washes. How in some work all is delicacy, evanescent ultimately into weakness, while in other all is firm and vigorous, a quality eventually leading, in some artists, to exaggerated poses and hypertrophied muscular development. Some made more finished drawings: Claude and Poussin in stately landscape compositions; Correggio and Guercino (in red chalk drawings of *putti* and other subjects) and Picart foreshadowing the methods of the nineteenth century professional lithographer; others again, in brush-washes of one or two tones, heightened with white, akin to the *chiaroscuro* method in engraving. There is wide variety in the use of wash. Bramantino, Annibale Carracci, Pietro Testa, G. B. Tiepolo and others applied it lightly to give body to freely indicated outlines. Tiepolo did this with a particularly noteworthy lightness and dash, his shadows flickering in a remarkable suggestion of ever-moving life. Somewhat heavier shadows and tones appear in some work by Palma Giovane or Pordenone. Polidoro, Parmigiano, Vanni, and others carry the method quite to a finished effect, and it is the reproduction of such work that we find in *chiaroscuro* prints.

The reason why prints have been mentioned several times in the preceding notes is to be found in the close connection between drawings and the processes of engraving. In pre-camera days drawings were assiduously reproduced in line engraving, "chalk manner," aquatint, mezzotint, and the *chiaroscuro* method, to render lines or tones; a special tool was even invented, the *échoppe*, to give the effect of broad pen strokes. And one finds parallel methods in drawing and engraving. P. G. Hamerton once traced the general process of development in engraving thus: 1, outline; 2, shading with straight parallel lines; 3, curved parallel lines; 4, cross-hatching. For 1, take some early Florentine plates; for 2, Mantegna's engravings; for 3, some of Duerer's plates; for 4, Goltzius. Now you can find the same things in these drawings. Here





CLAUDE LORRAINE  
LANDSCAPE, WITH A PROCESSION OF TRUMPETERS CROSSING A BRIDGE  
Chalk, pen and bistre, washed, on pink paper





ANTOINE WATTEAU  
SHEET OF STUDIES  
Red chalk

are sheets by Aretino, Foppa, or Sodoma, with no cross-hatching and with the return stroke of the pen (the hook-like effect at the end of a line of shading), which we find in engravings by Mantegna or Pollaiuolo. Furthermore, some of this fifteenth or sixteenth century work (say by Zuccaro), shows goldsmith influence, as do early line-engravings on copper. Then comes slight use of cross-hatching in shadows by Guido Reni or Raphael. Finally quite regular cross-hatching (by Domenico Campagnola, Enea Vico, or artists of the German school), becoming dull and meaningless even under the hands of an Agostino Carracci or of Martino di Bartolommeo, and ultimately degenerating into thoughtless application to fill space. The kinship between nineteenth century lithographic portraiture and the well-finished drawings of certain Italians has already been hinted at.

Here, then, there is opened up a by-way for the print-lover which has hardly been heavily traveled. And that again leads to the consideration of drawings by artists whom one has hardly known other than in their engravings or etchings, — Bega, Berghem, Du Jardin, Campagnola, Potter, Dusart, Bloemart, Breenbergh. There's opportunity to see the actual original sketch made by Ostade for one of his etchings. Or one may trace a foreshadowing of the aquatint tones of Goya's "Caprichos" in some of the wash drawings of Domenico Tiepolo.

Finally back of all there is the basic element of national or racial and individual expression, an element that is so powerful a factor in the appeal of drawings, of prints, of any form of art. It may be studied in the works of the artists, greater or lesser, already mentioned, of Rubens, Holbein, Duerer, Cuyp, Ribera, Cellini, Watteau, Greuze, Rowlandson, and others. The very list of names recalls to mind a wonderful diversity in outlook and in expression.

The exhibition, which has so much to offer and to so many, will remain on view in the print gallery (room 321) from the first of February until the end of April.

— F. W.



REPRINTED FEBRUARY 1919  
FROM THE  
BULLETIN OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
OF JANUARY 1919

PRINTED AT THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
FORM 1-123 [11-5-19 10]